

# Collecting Today's Stories



READING ART  
ENRICHES  
WRITING



Alicia B.

## Supplies

- Crayola® Colored Pencils or Markers
- Paper (for writing and sketching)

### Optional:

- Colored Paper
- Crayola® Scissors and Glue

## Prepare

We learn about historical events and how it felt to experience them because people wrote news reports, captured images, and created songs that described the experiences and how it felt to be *living in that moment*. This project is designed to help children think about the changes the pandemic is causing and to help them understand, in developmentally appropriate ways, the historical significance of something that is both personal and global.

## Introduction

Consider the breadth and depth of skills children develop when they collect information and report on what is happening in the world around them. Acting as a journalist, reporter, interviewer, visual documenter, or memoir creator is a powerful learning experience anytime, but especially during extraordinary situations. The unique circumstances children are living through during the 2020 global pandemic can be documented in ways that turn their everyday experiences into historically relevant artifacts. Giving children choices of the genres they use to record these extraordinary events personalizes their voice and increases their decision making during this project.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### Children will:

- discuss the historically significant experiences they are witnessing;
- select their methods of collecting information (personal reflections, interviews, observations, etc.);
- create original art and writing in a chosen genre; and
- present and preserve these written and illustrated artifacts to document a momentous period in history.

## Vocabulary

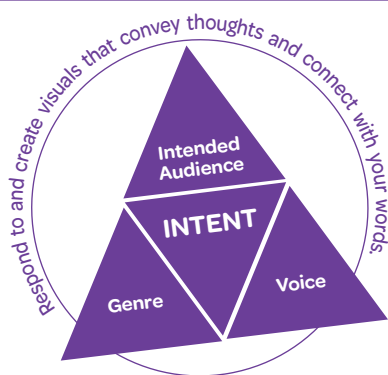
extraordinary	genre	artifact
experience	compose	pandemic
memory	dramatize	global
report	record	community
document	historic	disruption

## Essential Questions

- What examples from history demonstrate how ordinary experiences can be disrupted by extraordinary circumstances?
- How is the 2020 global pandemic disrupting everyday routines and impacting education, employment, and entertainment?
- What first-hand insights do children have about how the pandemic is impacting them, their families, communities, nation, and the world that would be informative to record today as an artifact of history when reviewed a decade or two from now?
- What written and artistic genres might be used to document the impact of this pandemic on daily life?
- Where are historical documents created, saved, and preserved? How can songwriters, visual artists, storytellers, scriptwriters, and others create artifacts that capture the sights, sounds, and feelings people experience during an extraordinary situation?

## Guiding Questions

- What experiences today will feel like exceptional or unbelievable news a decade or two from now?
- How can we capture what we see, hear, and feel today in descriptive ways that will bring the memories back to life when reviewed many years from now?
- What genres will best help us capture, record, and preserve the unusual experiences that are occurring around the world and in our neighborhood and home due to the pandemic?



## Intentional Writing Framework

**INTENT** – What is the main message you want to convey?

**INTENDED AUDIENCE** – Whom do you want your message to reach? Who might be the immediate audience and who might be the audience a decade or two from now when this moment in history is reflected upon?

**VOICE** – Will your voice be emotional, logical, or credible? How will you engage the audiences to help them understand the feelings and points of view presented in the work?

**GENRE** – What genres will best suit your intent, audience, and voice? How can combining more than one genre help to communicate your message?



- Discuss the news of the day in ways that are developmentally appropriate for children. It could be a personal conversation about how daily routines have been disrupted and how school, work, and social events have been cancelled. Older children are able to understand the more complex information about health precautions, social distancing, global trends, economic impact, etc. Children of any age can record how they feel and compare/contrast this day's experiences with daily routines before the pandemic began.

- Help children explore a range of genres that have been used to document historic events and to personalize those experiences by sharing thoughts and feelings. Examples to explore might include newspaper articles, diary entries, photo journals, sketch journals, non-fiction descriptive or instructive writing, first-person narratives, letters to a future self, poetry, postcards, drama scripts, and song lyrics. Some of those

genres can be blended together into a multi-media art form and might be captured by video, photography, or other means of archiving content. It is best to let children to select the genres they plan to use.

- Help children identify the main idea/message, intended audience, and voice while they consider one or more genres.

- Have them design and create the artifacts that capture the historically significant event they are experiencing first-hand.



- Depending on the genre selected and artifact created, children can present their work to family or friends now and decide how to preserve it to share with themselves and others in the future.

- When children have chosen the genres, ask them to explain their choices and assess what made them effective. Ask them if they would like to include additional genres before preserving the artifacts for a later review of the historic artifacts.



- Listen, review, and respond to each other's artifacts. Discuss the experiences each presenter chose to feature. Identify the similarities and differences in the focal experiences. How did each artifact capture a range of feelings?

- How does comparing and contrasting the content, genre, and voice help children develop a broader perspective of the situation?



- Connect the 2020 pandemic experiences to other historical events.

- Review the facts and the feelings that were most significant while working on this project.

- Discuss how people who have lived through historically significant events have also played roles in capturing those experiences through art forms.



Srishti T. Fort McMurray Alberta, Canada

## For Younger Children

- Provide something good to look forward to each day and frame an achievable challenge for which they can strive and succeed in accomplishing.
- Have children visually represent inner strengths and hopefulness. While they draw, an adult or older sibling might write their words and ask questions that help young children keep a balance between reality and joy in the artifacts they create.
- Read stories about characters who have been in difficult situations or have had similar feelings. Focus on stories about resilience, bravery, responsible choices, and overcoming fear.
- Ask children to interview elders in the family or community (via phone or video conferencing platforms) who can recall historical events and the ways they moved forward after difficult experiences.

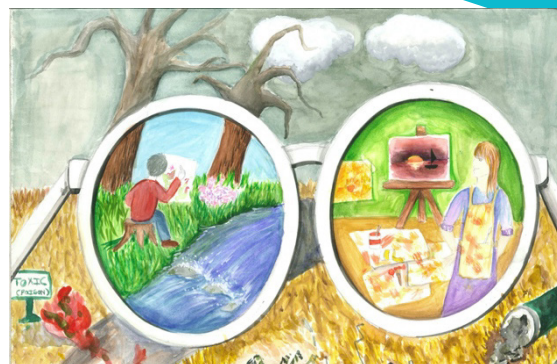
## For Older Children

- Encourage older children to relate personal and global experiences by researching stories from other parts of the world.
- Have older children read, view, and listen to what children from other times or places have written, drawn, and composed—and compare how experiences of loss, forced migration, hunger, natural disasters, and other unsettling events have led to extraordinary creativity, imagination, and problem solving.
- Everyone craves agency and some control over their lives—especially preteens and teens. Disruptions require quick adjustments. Changes in plans are frustrating and especially troubling for youth who feel they have no control over the current situation. Discuss why being a responsible decision maker is an important part of growing into a young adult. Urge them to write poems and create paintings that express the desire to have more control over the situation.



## Child Reflections

- Did our discussions help identify the story and genre each of us designed and shared?
- What part of creating a historical artifact do you feel most proud of? What parts of this project were most challenging? Successful?
- How can we preserve our artifacts so that we can revisit and explore them in the future?
- What additional artifacts will you create next? What genres would you like to try?



Erica J., Grade 6, Buena Park, CA

## Adult Reflections

- How does a discussion where adults listen to children and let them take the lead help us understand the experiences from their perspectives?
- Why is it important to help children understand that these are extraordinary times that should be documented through writing and art images?
- In what ways did allowing children to select different genres add to their agency, decision making, and voice?
- How will we protect and preserve the artifacts so they can be reviewed in the future?



Laura H.

## Standards and Skill Development

Standards provide a map for what children should know and be able to do. Standards set consistent expectations for all students but are meant to be connected to personal experiences and real-life projects. Depending on the genres selected and individual artifacts created, this project may address the following standards:

### LANGUAGE ARTS

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- Write informative, explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly.
- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and use a style appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### MATHEMATICS

- Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- Elicit evidence of thinking about time as a measurement.
- Include and apply knowledge of mathematical habits of mind and operations in original artifact production, as appropriate.

### SCIENCE

- Observe patterns in nature that prompt questions about relationships and their underlying causes.
- Understand that events have causes, sometimes simple and sometimes multifaceted.

### VISUAL ARTS

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Combine ideas to generate an innovative idea for artmaking.
- Use observation and investigation in preparation for making a work of art.
- Revise artwork in progress on the basis of insights gained through discussion.
- Identify reasons for saving and displaying objects, artifacts, and artwork.
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Identify and explain how and where different cultures record and illustrate stories that bring their history to life through art.
- Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences of oneself and others.
- Determine messages communicated by an image.
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.